

he made calling for the military to target Muslim women and children and equating American colleges to “Jihadi training camps.”

None of these individuals resigned because of their religion. In the United States—and I feel this so deeply—every person is free to practice the religion of their choosing and hold any and all beliefs. The reason these three individuals resigned from their positions was because their intolerant comments cast serious doubt on whether they were capable of working on behalf of all Americans.

That brings me to Mr. Vought's nomination. He has a long history of using inflammatory rhetoric to demonize his political opponents, and he just seems to abhor compromise. He has said that if Republicans fail “to beat back the forces of the left,” then “we will lose our country to tyranny.” Addressing a group of conservative activists in 2014, he said: “The left increasingly elects ideological storm troopers to Congress.” After he was nominated, the American Civil Liberties Union criticized his nomination because he had previously claimed that Muslims had a “deficient theology” and flatly stated that all Muslims “stand condemned.”

When I met with Mr. Vought, I asked him to clarify his inflammatory rhetoric. I always think it is important to give somebody a chance to break from the past, and I hoped to hear a softer approach. He chose to stand by what he said. In fact, he doubled down.

So I will close with this. In my view, nothing should have changed in the time since Mr. Higby, Reverend Johnson, and Mr. Bradford resigned in shame. This incendiary, vitriolic rhetoric is disqualifying.

One of the first requirements of nominees for public office is to respect Americans from all walks of life. This is true when you are talking about a position like the OMB Deputy Director which holds enormous influence over the Federal budget. Mr. Vought has a clear, documented record of disrespecting and demonizing those who think differently than he does, and I consider that disqualifying.

This administration may tolerate those who spew vile rhetoric, and maybe they believe it is right to reward them with powerful roles in government, but the Senate does not have an obligation to let the standards of decency and tolerance degrade in this manner.

For this reason, I oppose the Vought nomination.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

#### RUSSIAN FINANCIAL INFLUENCE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I come to the floor to give the first of several speeches on Russia's hybrid warfare operations against the West. Today, I want to highlight one aspect of this ongoing destabilization effort: the Kremlin's malign financial influence.

It is clear we need a whole-of-government approach and a comprehensive strategy to counter Russian aggression. A particular focus should be devoted to reducing secrecy in our financial system. It is a simple fact: Bad actors need money to conduct their activities. Yet our current financial system's opaqueness serves the interests of malevolent forces.

Greater transparency will make it harder for the Kremlin and its cronies to exert malign financial influence on our shores. The lack of transparency in our system is problematic for our banks here at home. The global nature of our financial system means that foreign actors can take advantage of our institutions for their own gain, which has implications for our national security.

I have looked at this issue through the lens of my work as ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, as well as my service on the Banking Committee and the Select Committee on Intelligence. Money laundering and other financial crimes are among the tools deployed by Russia as part of the Kremlin's larger influence campaign, which has been used against the United States and our allies and partners to advance the strategic and political goals of Russia. These activities are being used as weapons which threaten U.S. national security.

The Kremlin's use of malign financial influence is subtle and is part of a larger, coordinated operation of hybrid aggression by the Kremlin using a broad spectrum of military and non-military tools at its disposal. Russia recognizes that, for now, its military capabilities are limited relative to the United States and NATO, and it will seek to avoid a direct military conflict with the West. Instead, Russia deploys tactics that leverage its strengths and exploit our systematic vulnerabilities.

As laid out in the Russian National Security Strategy of 2015, the Kremlin's approach to conflict includes weaponizing tools and resources from across government and society. The Russian strategy states: “Interrelated political, military, military-technical, diplomatic, economic, informational, and other measures are being developed and implemented in order to ensure strategic deterrence and the prevention of armed conflicts.”

This describes what may be called a Russian “hybrid” approach to confrontation below the threshold of direct armed conflict, a method that has been developing and escalating since the earliest days of Putin's rise to power in Russia. The main tenets of the Kremlin's hybrid operations are: information operation with cyber tools—which people commonly think of as hacking—propaganda and disinformation, manipulation of social media, and malign influence, which can be deployed through political or financial channels.

As a nation, we are beginning to unpack what happened in the 2016 Presi-

dential election with respect to certain aspects of Russian hybrid operations. For example, we are learning how the Russians combined hacking operations with the release of information timed for maximum political damage. We have also learned more about Russia's manipulation of social media with Kremlin-linked cyber armies. But we have yet to understand the depths of how the Kremlin has used money as a weapon and how it has harmed our national security and our democracy. For this aspect of its hybrid arsenal, Russia is using money as a tool of warfare to exploit the vulnerabilities of our democratic institutions to its advantage.

The Russian system of corrupt financial influence rests on Putin's domestic power structure. The Putin regime is fundamentally a kleptocracy, which is a system where corrupt leaders use their power to exploit their country's people and natural resources in order to extend their personal wealth and personal power. Putin has systemically fostered kleptocratic conditions by exploiting state funds and resources to reward a group of close associates, commonly referred to as oligarchs. Many of these associates have a personal connection to Putin and have gained their positions of power or fortune due to their relationship with him. Often these political and personal relationships were forged in childhood, early adulthood, or during Putin's days in the KGB and the St. Petersburg government.

In exchange for wealth, privilege, and often impunity, this group of Putin's cronies are readily deployed to act on behalf of Kremlin interests. As Russian scholar and journalist Joshua Yaffa detailed, “Oligarchs finance the ‘black ledger,’ . . . money that does not go through the budget but is needed by the state, to finance elections and support local political figures, for example. Funds leave the state budget as procurement orders, and come back as off the books cash, to be spent however the Kremlin sees fit.”

Russia's kleptocratic system reinforces Putin's power in several ways. First, he controls who profits from state coffers, making the recipients of state largess indebted to him. Second, he can outsource projects of financial influence, which provides him with access to private wealth streams and gives him plausible deniability if the projects have a nefarious aspect. Finally, this system allows Putin to ensnare oligarchs who may have enriched themselves through a corrupt deal or committed crimes that were state-sanctioned.

Not only has Putin been able to use corruption to protect his power base at home, but he has then exported his kleptocratic system as part of his arsenal of hybrid warfare. The Kremlin has studied the gaps in Western society and leverages the oligarchs' wealth through the system of power Putin created, to buy our influence, distort our markets, and warp our democratic institutions.

As the Center for Strategic and International Studies report, “The Kremlin Playbook,” notes, “Corruption is the lubricant on which this system operates, concentrating the exploitation of the state resources to further Russia’s networks of influence.” A by-product of this malign financial influence is the use of ill-gotten gains to further fuel the cycle of corruption and fund other aspects of the Kremlin’s hybrid aggression.

As I mentioned, Putin and his inner circle often deploy these financial influence tactics through an oligarch. These intermediaries are not officially affiliated with the government and appear to operate independently, which makes them harder to detect and gives the Kremlin plausible deniability.

In conventional warfare, the tools of war are implements of physical destruction, but under Putin’s tactics of financial malign influence the tools are the same as any large-scale criminal organization: offshore tax havens and banking centers, shell companies, money laundering, with the addition of Russian majority-owned state banks.

Russian malign financial influence and the proceeds from this activity are harming our national security and corrupting our democratic institutions. As described in “The Kremlin Playbook,” “The mechanisms of Russian influence are designed to thrive in Western democracies because they use Western rules and institutions and exploit their systematic weaknesses.”

And these tactics appear to be updated versions of similar tools used against us in the past. As Russian expert Brian Whitmore wrote, “In many ways, Russian corruption is the new Soviet communism. The Kremlin’s black cash is the new red menace.”

He further described this threat as “a web of opaque front corporations, murky energy deals and complex money laundering schemes which ensnare foreign elites and form a ready-made Kremlin lobby.”

Let’s think about that for a second. The Kremlin is buying off foreigners to do its bidding within its own societies. And the way they are buying influence is obscured through exploiting Western banking laws and international financial systems. We have no way of knowing whom this money is going to or what it is buying. Russia is using our blind spot to advance their political and strategic goals and, in the process, corrupt and warp our institutions from within.

Let’s take a look at how they are doing it. One way the Kremlin is asserting malign financial influence is through personal relationships, established by oligarchs or through other Kremlin-linked business executives. As Vice President Biden and former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Michael Carpenter warned in a recent article in *Foreign Affairs*, this arrangement “gives the Kremlin enormous leverage over wealthy Russians who do business in the West and over Western

companies that do business in Russia. Moscow can ask (or pressure) such businesspeople and companies to help finance its subversion of political processes elsewhere.”

One oligarch who used this method is Oleg Deripaska. Deripaska has been a close Putin ally for decades. Deripaska is transparent about how his wealth was deployed as a tool for the Kremlin, stating:

If the state says we need to give it up, we’ll give it up. I don’t separate myself from the state. I have no other interests.

He served as the benefactor for a variety of political activities that advanced Kremlin interests. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, this financial backing included paying Paul Manafort, who later became Trump’s campaign manager, \$10 million a year to advance Kremlin interests in Ukraine, Georgia, and Montenegro. Investigations from NBC News and the *New York Times* found that Deripaska fronted Manafort an estimated \$60 million for other business ventures and loans, moving the funds through shell companies in Cypress and the Cayman Islands.

A second way these influence activities can be deployed is through Russian majority state-owned banks. These banks do not function like the ones we deal with every day. In fact, these banks often don’t care about making profits at all. Instead, they are using money as a weapon of influence, to advance the Russian state or enrich people who may ultimately advance the Kremlin’s aims.

An example is the Vnesheconombank, commonly known as VEB. The U.S. Treasury Department described VEB as a “payment agent for the Russian government.” This bank is essentially controlled by Putin’s inner circle as the President picks the chairman and the Prime Minister sits on its supervisory board. Foreign Policy journalist Elias Groll deemed the bank “a precision-guided diplomatic weapon.” As such, VEB has taken on a range of projects with one common goal—to advance Kremlin interests. VEB financed a large share of the \$50 billion Sochi Olympics, attempted to shore up the troubled Ukrainian steel industry, and underwrote the losses of key Putin cronies whose financial interests were hurt by U.S. and EU sanctions.

VEB is under sanctions for its role in financing Kremlin aggression against Crimea and eastern Ukraine. VEB garnered headlines because it was used as a cover for a spying ring with efforts to recruit people such as Carter Page, who later became a Trump campaign associate. According to the Department of Justice, conversations recorded between these Russian spies reveal that they saw tactics of financial influence as a way to gain Page’s cooperation. In addition, VEB Chairman Sergey Gorkov, a close Putin ally, met with Jared Kushner in December 2016, while VEB remained under sanctions. While the Trump administration said that

the meeting was in Kushner’s capacity as an incoming government official, a spokesman for Putin said that it was for business reasons. This bank is losing billions of dollars funding projects of political and strategic value to the Kremlin, bailing out oligarchs and being used as cover for spies. These activities don’t match with those of a “normal bank.”

Another tool of Russian financial influence is offshore banking centers or tax havens, which refers to financial institutions in a place that is different from where the depositor lives. Usually this is done for the financial and legal advantages the location provides, including secrecy and little or no taxation. The Russians have used these centers to facilitate the movement of money out of Russia. Once money finds a home in an offshore banking center, it can be relabeled as “foreign” and then can move back to Russia or to a third destination with the origin and ownership of the funds obscured.

The Panama Papers—a leak of over 11 million files from one of the world’s largest offshore law firms—showed that between 2007 and 2013, nearly \$2 billion had been funneled through offshore accounts to those in Putin’s inner circle. Top centers for Russian offshore banking include Cyprus, the Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands, Switzerland, and Bermuda. Russian experts, Michael Weiss and Peter Pomerantsev, noted: “These destinations, prized for their secrecy laws and tax havens, often make cameos whenever Russian corruption scandals are exposed in the international press.”

Cyprus became a particularly important haven for the Kremlin after the United States and the European Union issued sanctions against Russia for its aggression in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. Cyprus provided a haven for Russian oligarchs and others from Putin’s inner circle to keep their money safe from sanctions and served as a launching point for the money to be used to finance further malign influence activities.

Often the Kremlin and Kremlin-linked actors utilize offshore tax havens and shell companies together. Shell companies are legal entities that generally have no physical assets or operations and may be used solely to hold property rights or financial assets. Russia has exploited these shell companies as a tool to obscure true ownership, fund shady deals, launder ill-gotten gains, and further the cycle of corruption.

One Kremlin-linked money laundering operation, commonly referred to as the laundromat, moved an estimated \$20 billion out of Russia through Eastern Europe and then to banks around the world. The Russian journalists who uncovered the scheme found that the beneficiaries were Russian business executives who had state contracts with Russian Government or government-owned entities worth the equivalent of hundreds of millions of U.S. dollars.

The money was laundered by 21 shell companies based in the United Kingdom, Cypress, and New Zealand.

While it is easy to dismiss this as a problem that occurs in other countries rather than our own, Kremlin and Kremlin-linked actors are also exploiting our own laws in the United States to deploy these tools of financial influence. They are taking advantage of laws that do not require disclosure of who really owns a company or whose money is really funding these entities. They are taking advantage of the secrecy permitted in our system to continue their corrupt practices and intertwine their money into our systems.

As Acting Deputy Assistant Attorney General Day testified at a recent Banking Committee hearing, “the pervasive use of front companies, shell companies, nominees and other means to conceal the beneficial owners of assets is one of the great loopholes” in the anti-money laundering regime of the United States. Similarly, the 2015 Treasury Department’s National Money Laundering Risk Assessment estimates that \$300 billion is generated annually in illicit proceeds of the United States and cites shell companies as a means to move these funds into our domestic banking system.

The global, interconnected nature of our financial system has also been manipulated by Kremlin-linked actors to hold or move illicit funds and launder their ill-gotten gains across the West. In one prime example, Deutsche Bank was revealed to be helping Russian clients illegally launder \$10 billion between 2011 and 2015 in a mirror-trading scheme in which rubles were surreptitiously converted into dollars. This scheme would begin with Deutsche Bank’s Moscow branch buying Russian stocks in rubles. Shortly after, sometimes on the same day, a related party would sell the same Russian stock in the same quantity and at the same price through Deutsche Bank’s London office, but in dollars.

The New York State Department of Financial Services found that the parties doing the buying or selling were closely related to both sides such as through common ownership and that none of the trades demonstrated any legitimate economic rationale. The New York State Department of Financial Services concluded: “By converting rubles into dollars through security trades that had no discernible purpose, the scheme was a means for bad actors within a financial institution to achieve improper ends while evading compliance with applicable laws.” Deutsche Bank paid \$425 million to New York State in fines and an additional \$204 million to U.K. regulators for this money laundering scheme.

Kremlin-linked actors have also used real estate to launder illicit Russian funds in the United States and elsewhere. Often the purchase of real estate is done through an intermediary, which both obscures the true ownership of the property and hides the ori-

gin of the funds. These purchases are often all-cash deals, which is particularly problematic to trace and cut banks out of the process, which removes a crucial layer of oversight. Indeed, FinCEN, the Treasury Department’s Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, called out all-cash real estate deals in August of 2017 as an area of particular concern due to its lack of anti-money laundering protections.

One recent example of using all-cash real estate as a means to launder funds is the case of the Russian firm Prevezon. Prevezon is a firm owned by Denis Katsyv, the son of the former Kremlin Transportation Minister and a key Putin ally. Prevezon was charged by the Justice Department in connection with laundering the proceeds of an elaborate \$230 million tax refund fraud scheme, including buying real estate in Manhattan with some of the profits from this scheme.

As described, these tactics of financial influence, part of the Kremlin’s hybrid arsenal, have a corrupting and destabilizing effect on our democracies. Beyond the tactic itself, which is deployed to advance Kremlin aims, the ill-gotten gains created from these tactics continue to serve to concentrate Putin’s hold on power and fund other aspects of Russian hybrid warfare operations.

Profits gained from tactics of financial influence have underwritten the following malign activities: raising private militias to fight in Ukraine and Syria; assisting Russian military intelligence with conducting signals intelligence operations and other specialized technology and training against the United States in the 2016 election; funding troll operations that manipulate social media platforms in information operations against us and our allies; paying construction costs for a bridge between Crimea and the Russian mainland, which, once completed, will help the Kremlin to solidify its illegal annexation of Crimea.

The common link through all of these tools is secrecy. Putin and his kleptocratic system thrives on secrecy and on hybrid operations that blur the lines between legitimate economic activity and corruption, and between conflict and cooperation.

We need to take a serious look at how our government is organized to counter Kremlin hybrid operations in their totality. But one thing is for certain; we need to reduce secrecy in our banking system, which leaves us more vulnerable to the manipulation of our free market system by the Kremlin and Kremlin-linked actors.

We are getting a reputation around the world as a place to go if you want to hide money. This is contrary to both American values and the traditional role of the United States as the enforcer of international norms.

Starting in May of this year, many financial institutions will have to collect and verify the identity of the beneficial owners of companies at the time

of an account opening as a result of Treasury’s customer due diligence rule. While this is a start, we need to go further and pierce the veil of secrecy that has shrouded our system. We heard testimony in the Banking Committee on ways to improve U.S. disclosure requirements, including requiring disclosure of all beneficial owners, regardless of ownership stake.

I applaud those who have already been thinking about this issue. This includes recommendations, put out earlier this month by the Center for American Progress, that call for concrete reforms, including curbing abuses of shell companies, increasing FinCEN’s budget, and amending portions of the Bank Secrecy Act and Money Laundering Control Act in a way that would provide greater transparency and regulation regarding the sale of real estate.

There are also legislative fixes that have been proposed in the Senate. I appreciate that my colleagues Senators WHITEHOUSE, FEINSTEIN, and GRASSLEY have introduced legislation, the True Incorporation Transparency for Law Enforcement Act. I also recognize my colleagues Senators WYDEN and RUBIO for introducing the Corporate Transparency Act in the Senate. I know similar efforts have been made in the House of Representatives.

I intend to take a close look at these legislative proposals but the key, in my opinion, is making sure that we are able to trace these shell companies back to who is specifically benefiting and directing them; that is, any serious effort to determine ownership must stop only when a specific individual or individuals have been identified. Too often we take one step and find another shell company and stop right there. That doesn’t lead us to anyone. We have to find the individuals who are benefiting from and directing these activities.

The use of these shell companies, as I have said repeatedly throughout my comments, has a real effect on our national security. As the Special Counsel indictment against what is commonly called the “troll factory” shows, close Putin ally Yevgeny Prigozhin was funding an organization conducting what it called “information warfare against the United States.” Prigozhin used 14 affiliated shell companies to fund this operation as a way to hide the true source of funds. Without the full investigatory power and subpoena power of the Special Counsel’s office, we probably would not have uncovered the true ownership behind this operation. The Kremlin designs it that way, and we can’t let them keep getting away with it.

Part and parcel with exposing beneficial ownership would be to stand up an interagency task force led by FinCEN to follow the flow of illicit Russian money into the United States. This task force should leverage the intelligence community, the State Department, and other relevant government agencies to take a comprehensive

approach to uncovering where the money is going and how these ill-gotten gains are being spent. Remaining passive and waiting, is not going to deter, disrupt, and finally defeat these deliberate Russian efforts to undermine our basic institutions.

I will continue to work with my colleagues on the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee, the Armed Services Committee, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, and others to ensure that our national security apparatus has the requisite authorities.

What we need now is initiative by the administration to fully resource and to direct a comprehensive approach to detect, disrupt, and prevent this Russian interference. We need to put the appropriate resources against this threat. The heart of our democracy—our election process—was attacked by the Russians. As we learned yesterday from Admiral Rogers of Cyber Command, it is under attack as we speak today, and we can expect the attacks against the 2018 election cycle to increase with both frequency, boldness, and, unfortunately, effectiveness if we remain passive—indeed, paralyzed—as we are today. We have to recognize that the money that is being generated through these malign financial activities is being used not only to enrich Putin and his cronies but is being used to attack the United States very effectively. Putin has exploited our own laws that favor financial secrecy and has used clandestine tactics to his advantage at a relatively inexpensive cost.

Increasing, for example, resources to FinCEN in the Treasury Department or standing up and funding a task force, as I described, and devoting the necessary resources to tracing shell companies back to the people responsible would be a small fraction of what it would cost to use conventional forces to deter Russian aggression. Indeed, deploying a combat team to the Baltics is more expensive, I would suspect, than setting up a team of experts here in Washington that will go after these funding streams, and without the money, they cannot conduct their operations.

Mr. President, we often hear the expression “follow the money” as a way to identify the cause of a problem, and that is true here. Today, we know that our democracy and many others are under attack by the Government of Russia. Responding to this reality will require a comprehensive strategy to counter Russian asymmetric and hybrid tactics. However, as I laid out, an immediate step we can take is a concerted effort to bring greater transparency to our financial system. If we fail to do so, we will continue to have that very secrecy used against our national security interests and the interests of all of our allies.

Now is the time to act. We are being attacked. To sit back and absorb the punches will lead only to defeat, not to a final victory over our adversaries.

I yield the floor.

## CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). Morning business is closed.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Russell Vought, of Virginia, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

### TRIBUTE TO SALLY-ANN ROBERTS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, it is very hard, as the Presiding Officer knows, to become an icon in television news as station owners change, as demographics change, and as on-air personalities change. The “Guinness Book of World Records” actually tracks the longest serving television news broadcaster. In case one is curious, the current record holder is a broadcasting legend named Don Alhart, who has been delivering the news in Rochester, NY, for 51 years. I am happy for Mr. Alhart, but Sally-Ann Roberts could have taken that title from him had she not decided it was time to pass the baton.

After 41 years at WWL-TV Channel 4, in the great city of New Orleans, Sally-Ann Roberts is embarking on a new chapter in her life. She is retiring today. If anybody is worthy of icon status, it is Sally-Ann, and she is absolutely humble about it. If you talk to her about her career, she will probably turn the conversation around to you. If you insist on talking about her career, she will always give credit to her parents for instilling such a strong work ethic and a love for the Lord in their children.

Ms. Roberts came to WWL-TV from Laurel, MS. She was working as the weekend anchor in that small, wonderful town. She didn't even work every weekend; she worked every other weekend. Talent, though, does not stay hidden in America. A WWL-TV journalist by the name of Angela Hill, an icon in her own right, stopped near Laurel for the night. She turned on the television, saw Sally-Ann, and immediately told her news director to hire Sally-Ann. Angela recognized intelligence and talent when she saw it. Very shortly thereafter, Ms. Sally-Ann Roberts had the city hall beat in New Orleans, and the rest, they say, is history.

For the past 26 years, Sally-Ann has anchored the morning show on WWL-TV Channel 4 in New Orleans. She is as much a part of the morning routine in

New Orleans as eggs and beignets. Part of the reason people feel so comfortable with Sally-Ann is her positive attitude and pleasing personality. During cooking segments, she has been known to sneak bites of the crispiest bacon. During stories about neglected children—stories that would break anyone's heart—she would often tell us that she was shedding light on the need for foster parents, always trying to be positive.

The Presiding Officer probably knows Ms. Sally-Ann Roberts's little sister. Her name happens to be Ms. Robin Roberts. Robin is an anchor on “Good Morning America.” A few years ago, Robin was diagnosed with a very rare blood disorder. A bone marrow transplant saved Robin Roberts's life. Sally-Ann Roberts provided that lifesaving bone marrow. Here is a typical story about Sally-Ann. She went through the bone marrow collection process on a Tuesday and a Wednesday. By Thursday, she was dressed to the nines and doing a national interview to emphasize how quick the recovery time is. She wanted to educate America about bone marrow donation.

Let me say again that Sally-Ann Roberts is an icon, and I don't use that word lightly. If she had wanted, she would have probably been anchoring the evening news before a national audience, but she loved and still loves New Orleans, and that was where she chose to remain.

She has had an extraordinary career as a broadcast journalist. I know she is excited about what comes next. I suspect she will spend some time with her grandchildren. I suspect she will continue writing books and also driving home the importance of bone marrow donation. Sally-Ann, I know, will not just put her feet up and sit. Audience members like me are grateful she devoted such a lengthy chapter of her life to Louisiana and to our great city of New Orleans.

God bless you, Sally-Ann Roberts. Thank you for giving so much to our community and to our State.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

### TAX REFORM

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I have been coming to the floor to talk about the many ways the tax relief law has helped people all across America.

Last week, there were even more examples. One thing we saw was the “Economic Report of the President” that came out last Wednesday. This is a report from the top economists at the White House. According to the report, the tax relief law that we have passed and signed into law is going to raise